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22 October 1992

Ambassador Rui Quartin-Santos,
Portuguese Foreign Ministry,
Lisbon

Dear Dr Quartin-Santos,

In advance of next week's EC-ASEAN meeting in Manila when the accord between the two blocs which was vetoed by Portugal will be on the agenda, we take the liberty of explaining why we feel that Portugal should not abandon its veto.

1. We appreciate that your government is under strong pressure to abandon the veto. Earlier this week, the Philippines Foreign Minister Romulo spoke strongly on the question. Some may argue that your veto has already been effective in forcing the Indonesians to resume negotiations on East Timor at the UN, and to continue the veto would be counter-productive. But what is the background to this decision?

2. Indonesian officials have been working hard to convince the international community of their good intentions. The Indonesian press has gone out of its way to emphasise Jakarta's greater flexibility as compared to Portugal. Their decision to allow four Portuguese journalists to go to Jakarta was compared to Portugal's recent decision regarding Indonesian journalists going to Portugal. However, the four Portuguese journalists were unwittingly used to bolster Indonesia's image. The man who arranged their visit, Petrus Suryadi, of the daily *Suara Pembaruan* is an agent of *BAIS*, the military intelligence. While in Jakarta, the four met Major-General Nugroho S, Secretary General of the Department of the Interior, who is himself a key figure in *BAIS*. However, they were refused permission to meet the East Timorese prisoners in Jakarta and refused permission to visit East Timor. The military in East Timor were unwilling to face the prospect of turmoil that would have occurred there if the journalists had entered the territory.

3. Another show of greater flexibility was Foreign Minister Alatas' recent statement in New York that the President might grant pardons to the convicted East Timorese. (One of their lawyers has said, privately, that the prisoners would never ask Suharto for clemency.)

4. Jakarta's defeat on the IMET issue is bitterly resented by the military. Benny Murdani's fierce attack on 'Western meddling' this week is the latest example of this. The Indonesian regime blames Portugal and congressmen representing Portuguese communities in the US for this defeat in Congress. (In fact, only one of the four Congressmen who promoted the cut-off, Congressman Ronald Machtley, has any significant Portuguese community in his constituency.)

5. Many political analysts in Jakarta believe that the East Timor issue has caused rifts between President Suharto and the armed forces, *ABRI*. The armed forces do not look kindly on Jakarta's recent concessions. It is unlikely that they support Suharto decision to resume talks with Portugal under UN auspices. Analysts believe that he did this primarily because, as chair of NAM and in the present

global situation, he could not be seen to be refusing the offer of talks.

6. There is a liberal wing in the Indonesian foreign ministry which is in favour of the Secretary-General consulting Timorese in the frame of the talks. This wing of Indonesia's diplomatic corps (with Suharto a somewhat reluctant ally) is prepared to make concessions because they want to remove East Timor from the international agenda as quickly as possible and realise that the only way to 'get rid of the sharp gravel in their shoe' is to resume talks and seek an internationally acceptable solution. The fact that talks have resumed is recognition by this wing that East Timor is still **unfinished business.** Notably, the head of Indonesia's UN mission in New York, Nugroho Wisnumurti, belongs to this liberal wing. He is the younger brother of the late Sudjatmoko (a former ambassador in Washington and ex-Dean of the UN University in Tokyo). Together with Ali Alatas, they are seen as the influential *PSI* (the banned Socialist Party of Indonesia) wing at the top of the Indonesian administration.

7. However, there should be no illusions that, under Suharto rule, the East Timorese will achieve self-determination. The liberal wing will opt for a kind of autonomy, hoping that this will convince Portugal to agree to a compromise. Indonesian diplomats are toying with several scenarios, from a Goa *fait accompli* to a Mozambique or Angola compromise.

8. Meanwhile, the situation in Dili is far removed from compromises or concessions. Military rule is unrelenting; for *ABRI* East Timor is **finished business.** The military are determined to show, at home and abroad, that they run the show in East Timor. The Australian Parliamentary visit to Indonesia was prepared by the foreign ministry in Jakarta and a visit to East Timor was part of the programme. But it was cancelled at short notice; the military claimed that they could not guarantee the MPs' safety and used a number of pretexts to reject the visit.

9. There is no doubt whatever that the situation in East Timor is explosive, like a kettle on the boil with the lid on. Any visit by a foreign delegation could result in another Santa Cruz.

10. It is our considered opinion that by maintaining your veto, you would be giving a signal to the liberal side of the Indonesian equation that they must resist the inflexible stance of the military. To give in now would in effect mean giving in to the armed forces. The situation in East Timor is intolerable and until that improves, there is no reason to reduce your pressure.

11. We urge you to stand firm in Manila by condemning the deplorable situation in East Timor and the refusal of the military to allow any outsiders to visit. We would also appeal to you to press your EC partners to exert pressure on Jakarta to release the tried East Timorese in Jakarta and Dili.

12. People in East Timor are watching international events closely. The abandonment of your veto would come as a great blow to them and a victory for their military oppressors. Coming so soon after the Congress vote on IMET, the Timorese would find it difficult to understand.

13. Finally on another matter, we know that on several occasions leading Portuguese politicians, notably the MP, Rui Amaral and Vitor Crespo, the speaker of Parliament, have talked in international gatherings about the need to restore diplomatic relations with Jakarta. Again, pressure on Jakarta should not be relaxed. Lisbon froze diplomatic relations with Jakarta because of the Timor invasion and nothing substantial has changed.

Yours sincerely,

Carmel Budiardjo

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